



National Leaders' Eyes on the Everglades

District participates in Congressional Black Caucus event

Approximately 30,000 business and community leaders as well as local, state and federal elected officials registered for the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation's (CBCF) 33rd Annual Legislative Conference September 24-27 in Washington, D.C. "More than 100,000 people attended some part of the conference, and were able to see our Everglades exhibit," said Governing Board Vice Chair Pamela Brooks-Thomas.

Executive Director Henry Dean and other District staff were also at the conference, which featured an Everglades

restoration educational/outreach exhibit. The CBCF, a nonpartisan, nonprofit, public policy, research and educational institute, educates future leaders and promotes collaboration among community and business leaders, minority-focused organization leaders and organized labor to effect positive and sustainable change in the African-American community.

District staff meet and greet Congressional Black Caucus conference participants and provide them with information on Everglades restoration initiatives.

Hispanic Chamber Hails District Leadership

The South Florida Hispanic Chamber of Commerce named the South Florida Water Management District its "2003 Public Agency of Year" on November 7, at its 9th Annual Sunshine Awards luncheon. Miami Mayor Alex Penelas was the keynote speaker at the event in Miami Beach.

"The District has done a tremendous job with outreach to communities on Everglades restoration," said Chamber President Liliam Lopez. "I've

participated in many of these informational meetings and workshops, and was always impressed," Lopez added. "Sessions on the procurement opportunities that the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan will make available for area businesses were very helpful and well received."

Irela Bague, a District Governing Board member and a member of the Chamber's Board of Directors was also recognized as the Chamber's "Director of the Year" for her leadership of a number of very successful flood control partner projects in Miami-Dade County. "We also wanted to recognize Irela for her unstinting support for our organization and for member recruitment. She is dynamic and full of energy and commitment," said Lopez.

Exploring the Benefits of Public-Private Partnerships

District considers creative options to expedite water resource projects

According to Executive Director Henry Dean, the South Florida Water Management District faces a unique conundrum: increasing surface water storage facilities as soon as possible while complying with state and federal guidelines, and continuing to fund and carry out other restoration and resource management mandates.

"It has become apparent that we need to move forward as expeditiously as possible with the construction of additional water storage reservoirs, without giving short shrift to our other responsibilities," Dean said during a presentation to the SFWMD Governing Board in November.

"Building these facilities will allow us to significantly reduce the need for unfortunate and extreme releases from Lake Okeechobee to the coastal estuaries. And it will also provide for the attenuation of water before it is discharged into the stormwater treatment areas (STAs) — dramatically improving the efficiency of the STAs by smoothing out the peaks and valleys of water inflows during the course of the year," he explained further.

Improved water quality and increased water storage are the foundation for Everglades restoration. The three reservoirs identified as priority projects and potential candidates for accelerated construction are located on the Caloosahatchee River, the St. Lucie River and in the Everglades Agricultural Area.

Underscoring the fact that his discussion with the Board was strictly conceptual, Dean said he had challenged District staff to investigate and develop some creative options to address the current construction and funding dilemma. After coordinating and talking with key ecosystem restoration partners — the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers — the concept of public-private partnerships was identified as a potentially viable alternative.

Principles for Selecting Public-Private Partnerships

- IS THE PROJECT DETERMINED NECESSARY TO SERVE THE PUBLIC INTEREST WHETHER OR NOT A PRIVATE-PARTNER IS AVAILABLE?
- DOES IT PROVIDE THE BEST LONG-TERM VALUE TO THE PUBLIC? (RISK, CASH FLOW AND LEAST-COST ALTERNATIVE)
- DOES IT INCREASE TOTAL INVESTMENT IN THE EVERGLADES BY ADDING PRIVATE FINANCING?
- DOES IT IMPROVE THE PROJECT DELIVERY SCHEDULE?

There are a number of different types and examples of successful partnership ventures, each with varying degrees of benefits and risks to both parties. Using the simplified analogy of a 30-year mortgage, Dean indicated that the same principles and benefits would apply to a

public-private partnership: A small down payment is required up front; the financing and associated risks are assumed by an outside entity; affordable payments are spread out over a number of years meaning additional money is available for funding other needs; and, most importantly, the use of the facility is pretty much immediate.

Dean characterized the initial presentation as a "work in progress." The Governing Board gave him the directive to continue working with his staff,

DEP and the Corps to fill in more of the blanks as to exactly how the concept might be implemented, including a thorough analysis of both potential benefits and risks.



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SFWMD Governing Board Chair Nicolás Gutiérrez and Governing Board member Irela Bague (holding plaque) accept the "2003 Public Agency of Year" award on behalf of the District. Also pictured (left to right) Henry Dean, SFWMD Executive Director; Armando Trabanco, Incoming Chamber Chair; Orlando Romero, Chair, South Florida Hispanic Chamber; and Liliam Lopez, Chamber President.

An active member of the South Florida Hispanic Chamber's Board of Directors, Bague was also recognized as the "Director of the Year."